

# **Hiking Huntsville**

## **Volume 1 and Volume 2**

**Marcus Woolf**

# **Author**

# **Q & A**

Tell us about yourself.

*I was born in Huntsville and grew up on Monte Sano Mountain where I really fell in love with the outdoors. After I got my journalism degree from the University of Alabama, I moved to California and worked for outdoor magazines for several years. In 2002, I moved back to Huntsville, and since then I've worked as a freelance writer for outdoor magazines and websites. I've also written a hiking guidebook for the Atlanta area. For my work and for fun I spend a lot of time hiking the local trails. And I love to go canoeing and kayaking with my wife Wendy.*



Give a brief description of your books.

*These hiking guidebooks focus on Huntsville, Madison, and some of the nearby communities. Volume 1 covers Monte Sano Mountain, Huntsville Mountain and Green Mountain, while Volume 2 covers most of the remaining local trails, including greenways. The books have detailed descriptions of each trail, including interesting things you'll encounter along the way. There are also lots of detailed maps. For people who are new to hiking or new to the area, I've included a lot of information about the local environment, plus advice to help people plan hikes and explore the outdoors safely.*

What inspired you to write the books?

*A few years ago, I noticed that while I was hiking on Monte Sano I consistently met people who needed advice on trails to hike. Many of these folks had recently moved to town, so they weren't familiar with the local trails. With the city population booming, I realized there was a real need for more resources to educate people about our trail systems.*

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Are these books for beginners as well as hardcore hikers?

*I've included hikes that suit just about any person, whether you're new to hiking or a trail expert. Beginners will find paths that cross easy terrain and allow them to ease their way into exploring the outdoors. Families will find kid-friendly trails, and casual walkers can take advantage of several mellow trails and paved greenway paths. For dedicated hikers and people seeking a challenge or greater solitude, there are plenty of long treks and trails that cover remote and rugged terrain.*

What are some of your favorite local trails?

*One of my new favorites is the recently established Bethel Spring Preserve in Gurley. There you can hike only about a mile to reach one of the largest waterfalls in Madison County. During spring and summer, I enjoy hiking the Wildflower Trail at the base of Monte Sano. There you'll see beautiful wildflowers blooming along the trail, and you can cool off in shallow pools in Fagan Creek. When I want to escape for an extended hike in remote woods, I walk the length of Wade Mountain in north Huntsville.*

What advice would you give to hikers who are new to the Huntsville area?

*I would encourage people to support local organizations that do important work for our trail systems. Groups like the Land Trust of North Alabama and Huntsville Area Mountain Bike Riders play critical roles in developing and maintaining our trails. These organizations rely on volunteer workers, so there are plenty of opportunities to pitch in and help. If you're new to the area, volunteering is a great way to meet people and get involved in the community.*